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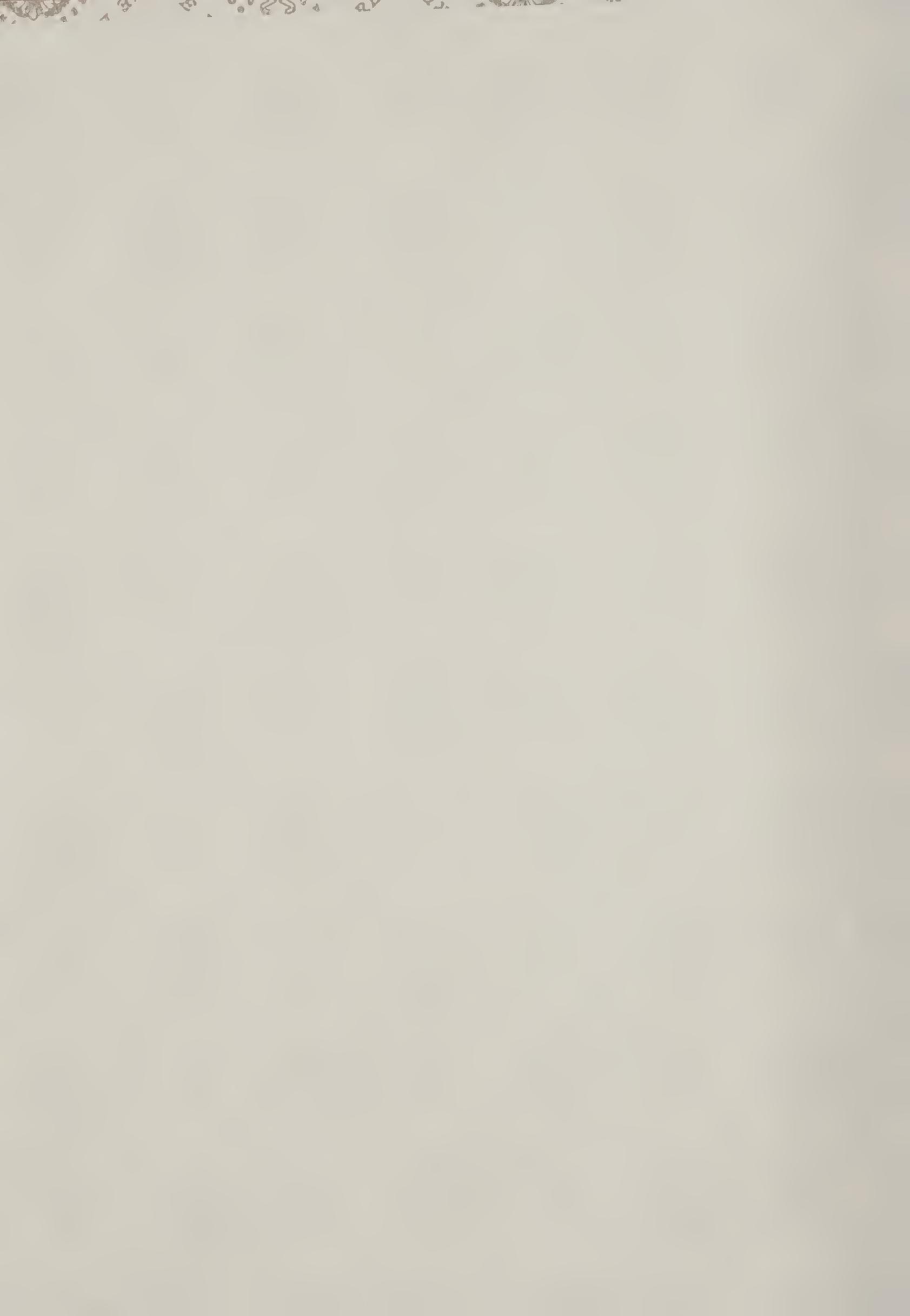
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**Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society  
of Rhode Island**

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# **Personal Narratives**

## **SEVENTH SERIES, No. 4**

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### **War Reminiscences.**

**By MARTIN S. JAMES,**

**[Late Captain Light Battery C, Third Rhode Island  
Heavy Artillery.]**







CAPT. MARTIN S. JAMES,

[Late Captain Light Battery C, Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]

PERSONAL NARRATIVES  
OF EVENTS IN THE  
WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE  
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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# WAR REMINISCENCES.

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BY

MARTIN S. JAMES,  
*18*

[Late Captain Light Battery C, Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]

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[Read before the Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society  
of Rhode Island during Winter, 1908 and 1909.]

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The Publication Committee had intended to ask Captain James to add some other reminiscenses to this paper, but before we could communicate with him his death changed our plans and so we have published the paper just as it came to us from him.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

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## WAR REMINISCENCES.

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When the War of the Rebellion commenced I was salesman for Lippitt & Martin, on Westminster Street, Providence, R. I. At the first call for troops for three months' service, I, with some of my companions, went to the armory of the First Light Infantry, intending to enlist with them. I made some inquiry of the captain and received such a reply as to make me angry. I said to my companions, "If you want to go out with such a man you can, I won't."

When the call came for the Second Regiment from Rhode Island, it was first published on Saturday morning. As I entered the store that morning, and as I passed the cashier's desk, Henry H. Young, the cashier, said to me something about going with the army. I made some reply and passed on to my department. During the day Young came to me and said he was in earnest and wanted to talk with me.

The store closed at sundown, except on Saturdays, when we kept open until eight or nine o'clock. Young and myself agreed to meet as soon as we closed the store. We went together over into what was known as the "Providence Cove Park," near the Providence Depot. We sat down on one of the iron benches and discussed the matter until nearly midnight. Young said that he could hire a horse and chaise (an old-fashioned two-wheeled chaise) for one dollar a day from a neighbor. It was agreed that Young should come with the chaise to my room, No. 8 Angell Street, at half-past five the next morning. He came as agreed, and we drove, I think, to Pawtucket, and there got our breakfast. We then went to Valley Falls. While the church bells were ringing and the good people of Valley Falls were wending their way to church, I was standing up in the chaise, haranguing a crowd of two or three hundred factory men and boys, while Young was taking the names of those who agreed to enlist. We obtained over sixty names at Valley Falls, and while there we heard of a Captain Tate, of Lime Rock, who had started to organize a company and had about twenty-

five names. We decided to see Captain Tate. We drove to Lime Rock and sent for Captain Tate to come to the hotel. Captain Tate had formerly belonged to the "Boston Fusileers." We proposed to join with him; our offer was accepted and it was agreed that he should have the captaincy, and Young and myself the two lieutenancies. It was also agreed that Young and myself should make a tender of the company to the State the next morning. We offered the State, early Monday morning, a full company for the Second Regiment. The fact that two boys (we were each twenty years old) should enlist a company in one day and make a tender of it to the State created quite a sensation. Mayor Rodman and other prominent citizens took a great interest in what we had done. The governor agreed that no matter what was offered for the Second Regiment, our company should be accepted and officered as requested by us. While at Valley Falls we had made an appointment to meet on the next Tuesday evening the men who had enlisted. Young and myself drove out to Valley Falls. We secured an empty school building for drill, also the services of a man who had been

sergeant in the English army to drill the men. We appointed Tuesday and Friday evenings for drill.

Everything looked bright and promising. For some reason there was a very long delay between the first call for the regiment and the final call for organization. I think it was several weeks. Young was a very quiet, reticent young man, therefore I had to do all the talking. We went out each Tuesday and Friday, and I usually made a speech to the men, telling them we expected the final call right away. After a few of these speeches we began to notice a strong dissatisfaction among the men. We could hear such remarks as, "Damned city snobs," "They are fooling us," etc. At each meeting the dissatisfaction grew stronger, and threats of riding us on a rail, tarring and feathering us, etc., were indulged in. The last Tuesday evening we went out to Valley Falls the men were so rough and boisterous that we had difficulty in getting them to drill or listen to any more promises on our part. Going home that night, Young and myself were very dubious about returning among them again unless we had favorable news from the State; but we decided we would not make

good soliders if we were driven off by a lot of factory men and boys; so when Friday night came we went again with the old horse and chaise, but we took the precaution to hide our conveyance at the edge of the village under an empty shed we found there. We walked up to the drill room. It was a clear and beautiful moonlight night. The moment we came in sight we were greeted with yells: "Here are the damned city snobs! Let's tar and feather them!" We managed to get into the drill room, but the men would not come in nor would they listen to anything. The only ones in the drill room were the drill master, Young and myself. The men were outside yelling like demons for us to come out and take a ride on a rail, etc. It looked mighty blue for Young and myself, and as though we wouldn't escape pretty rough handling. We held a council of war. The building stood on rising ground and at the rear was a small hill. It was finally decided that Young should get out of the rear window, go for the horse and chaise as quickly as he could, drive as near the front door as possible and I was to take my chance of getting into the chaise.

The men were all out in front of the building yelling like Indians. They didn't see Young get away from the building. I watched out of a side window, and pretty soon I saw Young coming on a keen gallop. I had on a light spring overcoat. I buttoned up my undercoat and overcoat, and just as Young reached the edge of the crowd outside, I appeared at the front door. The moment I got in sight of the crowd I tore open my overcoat, undercoat and vest, and thrust my hand into an inside vest pocket. A yell went up from those nearest the steps, "Look out he's got a pistol!" We were both unarmed. Young drove through the rabble right to the front door. I made a spring for the chaise, and as I jumped in I grabbed the reins and whip and we were quickly outside of the crowd, but were not quick enough to escape a shower of stones. I have forgotten how much it cost Young and myself for repairs to the chaise, but I know it was quite a sum.

The next Saturday night the call from Washington was flashed over the wires. Nineteen companies were offered for the Second Regiment, and regardless of promises made by the governor, it was decided to

accept them *pro rata*, that is, to make up the companies *pro rata* out of the nineteen. Our friends were indignant. I was taken ill at about that time and was confined to my boarding house. Mayor Rodman and others took up our case, and Young was commissioned second lieutenant in the regiment. Probably had I not been ill, I would have received a commission. I could not even see the regiment when it marched away as I was flat on my back.

One word about Young. He made a gallant officer and achieved a brilliant record. He was promoted to a captaincy, and finally became chief of scouts to General Sheridan, rising to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. A braver officer never lived. Sheridan, in his memoirs, gives him high praise. I never met Young again until the close of the war, when I visited him in his camp near Petersburg. He afterwards spent a day with me in my camp. Young was afterwards murdered in Mexico. He urged me very hard to go to Mexico with him. He was a gallant fellow and I have always deeply regretted his death.

As soon as I was able I returned to the store, but the spirit of war had got hold of me and I made up

my mind to go with the next regiment. In the meantime I joined the Providence Cadets, and what little knowledge I gained while with the cadets comprised my entire military knowledge.

The *Providence Journal* always lay on the counter near the cashier's desk, and I was in the habit of glancing at the news every morning when I came to the store. One morning in July, 1861, I picked up the paper and saw the call for the Third Regiment from Rhode Island. I waited until Mr. Lippitt came into the store, when I stepped up to him and said: "Mr. Lippitt, I suppose you are willing to sacrifice my services for the good of the country." He said, "Oh, yes," but I learned afterwards that he had no idea of what I meant. I got my hat and went direct to the governor's office. Governor Sprague was in the field with the First Regiment, and the lieutenant-governor was in charge. I started to tell him who I was, when he stopped me, saying, "Mr. James, I know all about you and what you have done; now I want you to take right hold and organize another company." I told him I had no means of so doing, but he insisted that I must. I finally said I would see

Colonel Earle of the Cadets, and if I could have the cadet armory I would try it.

I called on Colonel Earle and told him what I wanted. He said he was very sorry, but he had promised all enlistments in Cadet Armory to Major Gorham. I then asked if he would have any objections to any arrangements I could make with Major Gorham. He said, "Not in the least." I then hunted up Major Gorham and said to him, "If you will allow me to enlist a company in Cadet Armory, I'll do all the work and you can have all the pay and emoluments from the State. He at once accepted, so in less than two hours from the time I left the store I had a placard hanging out in front of the armory on North Main Street, "Recruits wanted for the Third Regiment."

My first enlistment was a man named Kaufman. He was very drunk at the time, but he made a good soldier. I told Kaufman after he had signed to go out and bring in his friends and any others he could get. I did this with all who signed at first. In a very short time I had a full company. I then commenced to drill them without arms. I would study

tactics at night and drill the men day times. I had a fine body of men and they drilled well.

During the winter of 1862 and 1863, while I was aide-de-camp to General Terry, and while we were at Hilton Head, I went to tea one evening and found the general in a very depressed condition. He would say but little, but said he would like to see me after tea. This set me to thinking, and I wondered what I had been doing. I could think of no special act of mine that would cause him to be so glum. As we got up from tea, he proposed a walk on the beach and so we started out. After walking some distance the general turned to me, and said, "James, I have a very sad duty to perform." I asked him what it was, and he said he was charged with carrying out the sentence of death on Private Lunt, of the Ninth Maine Regiment, who had just been sentenced to be shot to death by a court-martial for desertion and other crimes. It was such a relief to me that I could not help laughing. I said to the general, that while it was a sad duty, it was one of the fortunes of war, and I didn't see why he should feel so badly over it. The next morning the

general and myself took our horses and went out to look for a place to carry out the execution. It is an old army superstition, a simple idea, that an execution shall not be held on ground where troops are likely to camp. We finally selected a beautiful field just outside the center sally port of the line of fortifications. Pretty soon the general was pacing off ground away down through a hedge into another field. I asked him what he was doing that for. He said that he was going to place the troops in one straight line. I said that I supposed an execution like this was formed three sides of a square. The general admitted that it was the usual custom, but he thought it was cruel and wrong, and he was going to have it the other way. We had quite an argument. I maintained that an execution was intended to be a warning to the soldiers, and I thought it should be as impressive as possible. We returned that day without making any positive decision, except that the execution should take place on the field above mentioned. The next morning the general and myself rode out to the ground again, and we had the same controversy as the day before.

While we were on the ground, Colonel Metcalf, of my regiment (Colonel Metcalf succeeded Colonel Brown), came along. The general remarked to Colonel Metcalf what we were discussing, and the colonel sided with me. While the general was away for a moment the colonel said to me, "Stick to it, you are right." The general and the rest of us talked the matter over for some time. Finally, we started back. We were just inside of the sally port when the general turned suddenly to me, and said: "James, I place the formation of the troops entirely in your hands; form them as you think best." The execution was to take place the next day. I was then twenty-one years old and was to have the formation of five thousand troops. I can assure you that it put me on my mettle after all the discussion we had had to have the whole responsibility placed in my hands. It was not only a compliment, but quite a responsibility.

The day came. It was a perfect day without a cloud; just one of the perfect Southern winter days. The troops were ordered to report at sharp nine o'clock at the center sally port. There were nearly

five thousand infantry and one battery of artillery and one squadron of cavalry. I placed a guidon at one point and took trees in the distance for my alignment. I formed three sides of a square and was very successful in getting a perfect alignment. Strict orders had been issued that none but the troops and the general and his staff should be allowed outside either sally port that morning. At a little before ten o'clock the general, accompanied by some forty officers, rode through the sally port. There were a number of naval officers, members of the department staff, and other officers, whose only chance to attend the execution was by accompanying the general as staff officers. As the general rode into the center of the square, I presented arms by the troops. I turned and saluted, and my duty was at an end. I then took my position by the side of the general. The general brought the troops to a carry arms, marched the rear rank eight paces to the rear, then faced the front rank to the rear, which left the whole command in two ranks in open order. In a few moments the sound of muffled drums was heard, and through the sally port came the prisoner. He

was in an ambulance with the curtains rolled up on each side, sitting on his coffin. There was a funeral party in front, and the guard on the sides, all with reversed arms. In fact, the poor fellow was going to his own funeral alive. The ambulance and funeral party entered at the left of the line, and passed between the whole command with muffled drums beating and arms reversed. They came out at the right of the line and proceeded into the center of the square, facing the shooting party. The shooting party consisted of twelve men under the command of the provost marshal. Out of the twelve muskets, which are loaded by some officer, only eleven have a ball cartridge—one is loaded with powder only. The twelve muskets are all mixed up and distributed to the twelve men. No one knows which one has the musket without the ball. The prisoner was taken from the ambulance, the death warrant was read to him, and he was asked if he had anything to say. He said he had nothing to say, and at the same time turning to the shooting party, he said, "Boys, shoot right here," at the same time putting his hand over his heart. The provost marshal

stepped out to blindfold the prisoner, but he requested that he should not be blindfolded. He stepped forward and kneeled on his coffin. He was over six feet in height and a splendid specimen of physical manhood. His nerve was wonderful. I was just in rear of the shooting party, and I could not notice a single bit of tremor or weakness. The command, "Ready, aim," was given by the provost marshal, and the signal to fire was given by the dropping of a handkerchief. Eleven musket balls struck him but none of them struck his heart, but all around it. The force of the balls threw him back a little, but he fell on his face. In case death is not instantaneous it is the duty of the provost marshal to use a pistol. I am under the impression that the provost marshal fired a shot into his head, but I do not remember positively. As soon as the execution was over the general dismissed the troops. Then the general with all the staff that had accompanied him started to return. I took my position just to the left of the general. After passing through the sallyport we came to an open space near a large powder magazine. The general reined

in his horse, and as soon as all halted and he had their attention, the general removed his hat, and turning to me, said: "Mr. James, very handsomely done; I thank you, sir." It was a sad scene, but it passed off without a single occurrence out of the usual course. I have stated all these circumstances as it was one of the important events of my career in the army, and as it gives you an idea of how an execution is conducted, or rather, how one such event was carried out.

One morning I established my forge for shoeing horses in a clump of small trees just off the main road that led to our works at Bermuda Hundreds. There were a good many horses to be shod. I had gone into camp in the field opposite. My men had been at work but a little while when an orderly came to me and said, "General Ames requests that there be less noise in your camp." In a short time he came again, and finally the third time. I had been watching and there was no unnecessary noise; in fact, hardly any noise at all. When the orderly came the third time, I said, "I will see the general." I had heard of General Ames (afterwards the war gov-

ernor of Mississippi). He had the reputation of being quite a martinet. I went to his tent, which was but a little way from the forge. I introduced myself and said that I had received several messages regarding noise in my camp; that, when I set up my forge I was not aware his quarters were so near; that I was shoeing horses, and there was no more noise than was necessary in such work, but that I would move my forge. The general spoke up quick and said: "You will do nothing of the kind. There is no noise; I am nervous this morning, I guess. Say no more about it." This was my first interview with General Ames. We had quite a conversation. The next morning an orderly came with General Ames' compliments, and said that the general would like to see me. I went to his tent. He greeted me very cordially, and said: "Captain, I am going out to Port Walthall Junction with my division, and I have selected you as my chief of artillery." I thanked him for the compliment, and said that unfortunately I could not serve, as the captain of a New York battery outranked me. "Oh, that has all been arranged," the general said. "That battery

has been sent elsewhere." There was then no getting out of it. All the objection I had was that there were two regular batteries under command of lieutenants attached to his division and I hated to command regulars. The following morning we started for Port Walthall Junction in a rainstorm. It did not rain hard, but for three days and nights it was a steady rain. About noon we reached the Junction. I placed my battery in position near headquarters. The general took a barn for his headquarters, and I took a cornerib, nearly opposite, for mine. My cornerib was a terribly leaky affair. I had on a new pair of boots that were a little tight, and I did not dare to take them off for fear that I could not get them on again. We stayed at this Junction for three full days. I was wet to the skin all the time and could hear the water slosh around in my boots. I never saw a rain so steady, but luckily it was a warm rain. The harnesses were not taken off from the horses while there, and when we watered the horses I sent only a pair from each piece at a time. The enemy were right across a deep ravine in front. Towards evening the general sent

for me and directed that I place a battery after dark at a certain place. It was rather an ugly place, and there was but one company of infantry for support. I knew the regulars would make a fuss if I sent them, so I decided I would send my own battery and bring one of the regular batteries up into my position. Just about dark I was getting the battery ready to move, when the general came out and asked what battery I was sending. I replied: "My own." "Why don't you send one of the other batteries?" he asked. I replied, "To avoid a fuss with the regulars I have decided to send my own battery." The general said, "I want your battery right here. You send one of the other batteries, and if there is anything said send the officer to me." I ordered one of the regular batteries, and there was just the howl I expected. I told the officer to see General Ames, but you can rest assured that he did not do so. It was a very wet, nasty time. I had to get fence rails to put under my guns to keep them out of the mud. There was nothing of special importance that occurred during the three days. The enemy made no attack on us. Late one evening we received orders

to move at three o'clock the next morning and join Butler at Drewry's Bluff. That evening my men killed a cow that had wandered too near the camp. When they learned we were to move they commenced cooking the meat, and before leaving in the morning all the men ate of it. It cleared off that night, and when we started at three o'clock A. M. it was clear with not a breath of air stirring. It was so still as to be oppressive. Some two or three weeks before there had been a cavalry fight near the road we had to march over, and lots of dead horses had been left in the woods. The stench was something fearful. The meat the men had eaten had been cooked before the animal heat was out of it, and when I reached what was known as the half-way house on the Richmond and Petersburg turnpike I had as sick a lot of men as you would care to see. I never saw such vomiting in my life. It was about all I could do to keep from vomiting myself. There was a Pennsylvania regiment drawn up on the road. The colonel and staff sat on their horses. I had no surgeon with my battery at that time, so I asked the colonel if he had a surgeon. He pointed out his

surgeon, and I remember how they all laughed at my description of the condition the men were in and its cause. The surgeon rode down to my men and kindly prescribed something that soon settled their stomachs. About ten o'clock I went into camp in a large open field near the half-way house. It was a relief to the horses to be unharnessed and placed on the picket rope. I took off my boots. I remember calling up some of the officers to look at my feet. Talk about a washerwoman's thumb, it was not a circumstance. We were camped just off the main road leading to the front. That evening Captain Belger, who commanded one of the batteries of the First Rhode Island Light Artillery, passed by with his battery, going into position at the front. I called to him and he rode into my camp and took a drink with me. The next morning he was a prisoner of war in Richmond. I always had a standing order to the guards to call me if anything unusual happened.

At four o'clock the next morning there was very heavy firing at the front. I lay listening to it, when the guard in front of my quarters called me. I

jumped up and dressed. It was the opening of the battle of Drewry's Bluff. I never saw such a fog in my life. It was like looking into a snowbank. I believed there was serious work ahead, so I at once ordered boots and saddles. I had no idea of any defeat, or of our troops being driven back, so I did nothing towards striking camp. I ordered breakfast for the men at once. We couldn't see a rod in any direction. The firing seemed to get heavier and nearer. All the officers of the battery were sitting at the mess table and our coffee had just been handed us, when a staff officer came riding by and yelled to us: "Get to the rear as quick as God will let you. The enemy are right upon us; don't stop for anything." We all sprang into our saddles, leaving everything behind in the way of camp and garrison equipage, even our mess table and our coffee untasted. I took the battery out on to the turnpike and went about three-quarters of a mile to the rear and took position upon a high bluff. The horses had not been watered, so I sent men to hunt water, which they found near by. I then ordered the horses watered, a pair at a time

from each piece. They had finished watering when I received orders to get to the front as quickly as I could. Away I went with six pieces and six caissons at a keen jump and went into position right on my old camp ground. I received orders to shell a piece of woods that was about a thousand yards in front of me with all my power. I poured in percussion shell with all the rapidity we could. After firing some time I received orders to cease firing. I learned that reports came back from the front that the firing had been very effective on the enemy, who were attempting to mass their troops in these woods. I then sent the quartermaster sergeant and a squad of men and recovered all my camp and garrison equipage which I sent to the rear. In a little while I was ordered to open again on the woods. I think I shelled the woods four or five times during the morning. The fog would raise a little at times, and by ten o'clock was all gone. I was under the command of General Ames first, then ordered to report to General Brooks, then to General Baldy Smith, and finally to General Terry. While under command of General Baldy Smith, General Butler rode

down the turnpike to the rear. At that time my battery was right across the turnpike. General Butler was accompanied by his staff, a squadron of cavalry and his big yellow headquarters flag. As he got within about fifty or seventy-five feet of my battery I was sitting on my horse right on the road. He called to me and said: "Captain, I order you to load with canister, and for God's sake fire low." As canister is destructive from the mouth of the piece, and as we had two lines of battle right in front of me, I supposed he simply meant for me to load with canister when it became necessary. I had several stand of canister lying on the ground at the muzzle of each piece, so I simply acknowledged the order by a salute of my hand. The general then spurred his horse forward, and shaking his fist at me repeated the order in exactly the same words as before. He being the commanding officer on the field, I had nothing to do but obey, so I gave the order, "Load with canister for action, load." The general and his party had hardly gotten through the battery when an aid from General Baldy Smith rode up and ordered me to open on the woods again. I

saw General Smith and staff about three hundred feet away, so I said, "I'll see the general." I spurred my horse and rode over to General Smith. I was mad and disgusted, and I said to the general: "I'm loaded with canister by a d—— foolish order." "By whose order?" the general said. I replied, "By General Butler's." I won't attempt to describe what an oath he ripped out. The general asked if I could take it out. I said, "Yes." "Then take it out and open on the woods," he replied. The foregoing incident was published in *Harper's Magazine*, in the Drawer years ago, by whom I do not know, but I have told the story many times. I think it was published in 1884-5 or 6. Up in the Black Hills I told this story to a minister Saturday night, and Sunday morning he repeated it in his sermon, making a very happy illustration. It was Dean Ware, the Episcopal Dean of the Black Hills, who was a very warm friend of mine.

About 11.30 a. m. a four-gun rebel battery of Napoleon guns came out on the turnpike, about one thousand yards from my battery, and opened fire, taking my battery for a target. Their firing was

very poor and did me no harm, but one of the shells went over my battery and into a Connecticut regiment that was in line at the half-way house, killing and wounding three or four men. I was then under General Terry, having been ordered to report to him just before. I was waiting for orders to open on this rebel battery, when General Terry rode up, and raising his hat, said, "Captain, can you silence that battery?" I had been looking the ground over, and just about an eighth of a mile to the right inside our lines there was a point of land that was high and would give me an excellent position. I replied, "General, if I could take my four rifles (I then had four three-inch rifles and two howitzers) on to that point (indicating it), I think I could." The general looked at it for a moment, and said: "Very good, take it." I then went flying with the four pieces. I went into battery, gave the gunners the elevation, and for a few minutes we fired with all our might. The first shell went right into the rebel battery and knocked over some horses. I don't think it was over three minutes from the time I opened when the rebel battery limbered up and went to the rear on a

run. Our whole army cheered. I then limbered up and went back to my old position. General Terry rode up, and bringing his hat down to his side, said: "Very handsomely done, Captain, very handsomely done. I thank you." The captain felt good. It really was a very pretty thing and well done. Our army had been roughly handled. We were badly beaten and driven back out of all our works. About two o'clock orders were given to retreat to our works at Bermuda Hundreds. I see by the records that the losses on both sides in this engagement, in killed, wounded and missing are said to be over ten thousand. I have given you a full account of this battle, as I think it was the heaviest fight I was in in the open field, although it wasn't nearly as hot a fight as Pocataligo, but there was a very much larger number engaged. We retreated in pretty good order. There was a captain of a Maine regiment whom I knew, and I saw him that day lying on a bank beside the road. I asked him what he was doing there, and he said he was sick. A few days after I happened to be riding and I saw a regiment drawn up in line as if for dress parade.

As it was not the right time for dress parade, I rode up to see what was going on, and I saw this officer drummed out of the service by order of General Butler. His sword was broken, his straps cut off, and he was marched in front of his regiment, the band playing the "Rogue's March," I presume. I met this officer in St. Louis in 1867 and it was not a pleasant meeting for him. A few days after the battle of Drewry's Bluff, General Terry sent for me. I wondered what was up now and what I had been doing. I went to the general's quarters and he met me with great cordiality. He took me into his private quarters, brought out cigars and I guess a bottle. After some conversation the general said: "By-the-by, James, I heard you had expressed a wish for a battery of Napoleon guns." My reply wasn't pretty, but I'm telling things as I remember them. I said: "General, I don't think that I ever got so drunk that I was willing to exchange my rifles for Napoleons, but I'll tell you what I would like to do. I would like to turn in the two howitzers you captured at Fort Pulaski and get rifles in their places. I've made two or three applications but they were

not approved." The general said, "You make an application now." As soon as I returned to camp I made an application, and at twelve o'clock the next day I had the guns. This made my battery complete, six three-inch rifle guns, the prettiest and best guns I think at that time. I can remember how proud and happy I was over getting these guns. The howitzers were pretty pieces. They were of brass and had the Georgia State coat of arms between the trunnions, but they were very short range and defective in the breech. They sort of spoiled my battery. With six rifles I was ready for any service.

Now I come to the night before the surrender or evacuation of Richmond. For three days I had been in command of the brigade. Captain Langdon, a regular officer, had been down to Norfolk, but he returned the evening before. Had he stayed away twenty-four hours longer I would have been in Richmond several hours earlier and have fired the salute at noon, but of course volunteers had to stand aside for regulars at such a time.

I was up the whole night before. We knew that great events were transpiring but could get no au-

thentic news. I was between the front and General Weitzel's headquarters most of the night. I happened to be looking towards Richmond and saw two explosions, said to be their arsenal and a gunboat. It was a grand sight. Just at the first break of day I saw General Weitzel and a squadron of cavalry go through where the rebel picket lines had been. I just flew to camp, and as I rode into camp I ordered "boots and saddles." In less than one hour we broke winter camp and were on the road for Richmond. At the opening made in the rebel lines I had to wait until a regular battery came, and was only given permission to go ahead on condition that I wouldn't pass it. I marched with the battery until I came right opposite Libby Prison. I halted the battery, and with an orderly I rode into the city. My horse that I had ridden for nearly two years and whom I never knew to trot a step, the moment we struck the pavement struck into a square trot and kept it up until off the pavement. I rode up to the Capitol and rushed upstairs into the Senate chamber. General Weitzel sat in the Speaker's chair. Everybody was wild that day. As I went

in I yelled to the general something. He called out to Major Stevens, "Stevens, gives James some whiskey and stop his mouth." I can see Stevens now, as he came tumbling over the desks and seats with a canteen in his hand. I took the canteen, and holding it up I said, "Here is to the Southern Confederacy." I took a swig and then rushed out and went through the different rooms in the Capitol. I filled my pockets with what I could find. I then rushed back to the Senate chamber, and going up on the platform, I begged with tears in my eyes to fire a salute. The general laughed at me, and said: "You know, Captain, I can't interfere." He then ordered me to come into the city with my battery and go into camp near the fair grounds. I marched through the city, turning every corner, bugles tooting, etc., etc. After going into camp I sat up on a caisson, the only time I ever wrote a letter in that position, and wrote a letter on some of the rebel stationery to my mother. As this is a true story I must own up that it was a little doubtful if I could see as far as the end of the pole, but I have since read the letter and it was pretty good. While I was writing,

an old white-haired rebel came along and, stopping in front of me, said: "Young man, this is a proud day for you, but it's a bitter time for me. All I've got left is my house and a little hay right over there." I yelled out to the quartermaster sergeant: "Here's a man who says he has got some hay. Take some men and go and get it." This was a little mean, but afterwards I did considerable for some of the old citizens, and they seemed to appreciate it, even if it did come from a "Yank." The next morning I received orders to take charge of dismantling all the rebel works on the side of Richmond towards Washington. I was given an officer and one full section from each of the eight batteries, about three hundred officers and men and about two hundred horses. Every afternoon for several days I came through the city of Richmond with a long line of captured artillery. If I remember rightly I parked some three hundred and fifty-seven pieces down on Rickett's wharf. Everything from a four-pounder to a ten-inch Columbiad. It would take a big sheet of paper to tell you of all the fun I had in Richmond.

After we had been in Richmond a week or ten days

the artillery brigade was ordered to take position in south of Petersburg and about three miles from the city. Just as we moved, a detail was made for a court-martial, and I was made president. The first morning we were in our new camp the court convened at my quarters. Generally the first session of a court is only preliminary, and nothing much is done. General Ord was in command at Petersburg and had issued stringent orders that only general officers and staffs should be allowed into the city. After we had adjourned court, I turned to the officers and asked them how they would like to go into Petersburg. I said, "If you want to go as my staff and will carry it out in good shape, why, we will try it." All agreed but one officer, who was evidently afraid. In court we have to be in full dress. I put on an old sack coat without shoulder straps, top boots and an old slouch hat. Several of the officers had orderlies and I had mine, and off we started. When we came to the guard around the city I rode a little ahead and my staff trailed on behind. The guard stood at attention. We rode on into the city, and not knowing anything about the place, we

turned a corner which brought us into the public square, and the first thing we heard was the call of the guard, "Turn out the guard, general officer." The guard was a very large one and was under command of a lieutenant-colonel. It took some time to form the guard. Arms were presented. I raised my hat in acknowledgment and we rode on. We went in three times within a few days, but we were careful to avoid the public square. I finally heard that passes were being granted into Petersburg, and I knew General Weitzel would think it strange if I did not apply for one. So one morning, while at headquarters, I said to the general: "I hear they are giving passes into Petersburg. I guess I would like to take a look at the city." I can see the general now as he looked at me and said, "James, you have been in there three times within a week, and if it was any other officer I would court-martial him."

W 60



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
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